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WALL DECORATION.

BY M. H. BIRGE & SONS.



THE rapidity with which the novelties brought out by M. H. Birge & Sons are taken up by the trade, proves that these manufacturers know how to hit upon just what is wanted by house decorators generally. The singular softness and subtle elaboration of their productions command the highest admiration, the treatment being in effect the very opposite of the hard look of much wall paper printing.

The main object of these manufacturers is to

provide a first-class eclectic set of patterns from which the decorator or furnisher may at once satisfy demands in any style. To illustrate this we cannot do better than show an interior decorated with one of their new patterns of paper-hangings for the season of 1895. The ornament is in the style of a stripe, with what is known to the trade as a "Crown" frieze, which finishes off the paper at the top so as to produce the effect of one continuous pattern. The illustration shows the pattern only, but does not give an idea of the coloring. We were shown a number of styles of this combination—one particularly graceful was a dark blue stripe on a cream white ground, with a floral ornament in stripe in white and pink flowers with green leaves. The whole combination is very new and original, and fits beautifully the modern style of furnishings known as the now popular "Colonial" style. The woodwork is in ivory white, and the moulding at angle of ceiling is in the same ivory tone picked out with gold.

Decoration and furnishing more than ever go hand in hand, and the demand is for delicate and restful combinations such as we illustrate.

WALL-PAPERS AND STENCILLING IN ENGLAND.

BY T. R. SPENCE.

THE first record of the manufacture of paper-hangings in England dates from the year 1692, as a patent was taken out at that date by a William Bayley, who stated that his invention consisted of "several engines made of brass," for the printing of all sorts of paper, of all sorts of figures and colors whatsoever, and that "the said invention had not been heretofore known or practiced by any of our subjects." There is no doubt the first attempts were the imitation of tapestry, linen, or other hangings that were at that time fashionable. In the reign of Queen Anne, 1712, a duty was imposed on paper-hangings. They were made on pieces, sixteen to twenty four sheets, forming about eight square yards; each

sheet bore the government stamp; the duty was $1\frac{3}{4}$ d. per square yard. Paper stainers were required to pay an annual license of £4.

In the reign of Queen Anne, paper hangings were imported from China. Probably the first idea of their manufacture here was suggested by these importations. In 1746, larger blocks were used for wall paper printings, some two yards long, made from light material, but these were soon found unsuitable, and were replaced by heavier and shorter blocks.

In 1753, Edward Deighton used engraved metal plates in a rolling mill. The designs were afterwards colored by hand; gilding of parts was also introduced by him—doubtless suggested by the gilded leathers used in the 16th century—for wall covering. A man named Jackson about this time made and sold papers in imitation of statues, landscapes, etc., and quaintly remarks that "the persons who cannot purchase the statues themselves may have these prints in their places, and thus effectually shows his taste."

Whether his cheap antiques "caught on" I am unable to say. In a work printed by J. Nourse, in 1764, it is stated that there were three methods in use, namely, printing in colors, using the stencil, and painting with a pencil or brush.

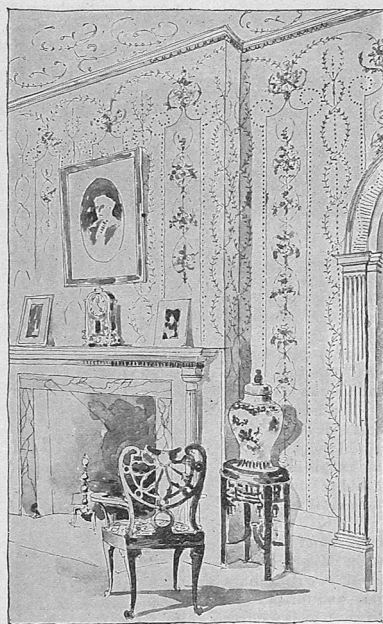
These processes are described at some length, and approached the block printing now in use. Stenciling was found to be cheaper, but not so sharp as blocks. The pencil was used for finishing and adding further details. Flock printing was also described as giving faithful imitations of silks, velvet, damask, etc. A piece of paper was taken off the walls of a mansion near Whitehaven in 1786; it was asserted that it had been there for about two hundred years. Its thickness was that of card-board, and the ornament had been stenciled and afterwards finished by hand.

Sherringham, of London, in 1786, as the result of journeys to the Continent, made great advances in the art of paper staining.

Anthony G. Eckhardt, in 1792, made papers from engraved copper plates, and decorated them with silver and gold leaf. This gilding was the invention of John Hautch, of Nuremberg, about the middle of the 17th century. It was a preparation of tin and copper, and is now commonly known by the name of Dutch metal. Eckhardt also printed on stiffened linen, finishing by gilding and varnishing. He employed artists of considerable skill.

In 1796, G. T. Hawcock was the first to introduce embossed paper.

In the picture galleries at Hampton Court Palace are the remains of wall-papers which are asserted to date from the time of Charles I. There are, or were, some old flock papers on the walls of King William's bedroom, dressing room and writing room. The date of their production I cannot state. They may not be very old, as the patterns are like the patterns used fifty years ago. Paper-hangings fifty years ago were made of several sheets, 23x28, fixed together in lengths of twelve yards. Lewis Robert, a French workman, in 1799 made a machine for producing paper in endless pieces; and in 1803 John Gamble obtained a



WALL DECORATION IN PAPER-HANGINGS FROM THE NEW PATTERNS OF M. H. BIRGE & SONS, FOR SEASON OF 1895.